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**LaPorte County Commissioners vow to fight
Investor-owned utilities' request that ratepayers
pay for utilities' lost revenues during Covid-19 crisis**

The LaPorte County Commission voted at their regular meeting on Wednesday to authorize the LaPorte County Attorney to file a petition to intervene with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) formally opposing the petition just filed by the state's investor-owned utilities to impose the cost of lost revenues during the Covid-19 crisis on ratepayers.

County Commissioner Dr. Vidya Kora, in making the motion, said "I see patients in my medical practice every day who are having a hard time paying the rent or are on fixed incomes – the notion of being taxed by the utilities to make up for the utilities' lost revenues during this pandemic strikes me as outrageous. There is absolutely no reason that utilities get all the benefit when times are good and dividends are paid to ratepayers, but that when times are bad, the same shareholders don't bear that risk."

County Commission President Sheila Matias, who supported the motion, echoed Dr. Kora saying, "Frankly, this is disgraceful. Every day I hear about suffering and sacrifice from the taxpayers I represent who are struggling mightily with the steep financial hit of this pandemic. Every other business is dealing with lower sales volumes with reduced profits. Other businesses are having to redefine and adjust their business models. Why should already-struggling ratepayers have to subsidize utility investors through this crisis? LaPorte County has played a key role in fighting for our taxpayers in utility cases over the past two decades and it's only fitting that we help lead the fight in this one."

Dr. Kora added, "This is not just directed to NIPSCO and I&M – the two utilities serving LaPorte County – but to all the investor-owned utilities in Indiana that filed this petition. There is bi-partisan outrage about this notion of the utilities laying the cost of lost revenues during this crisis solely on the backs of ratepayers when it's their shareholders who need to bear this cost."

In response to the commission action, LaPorte County Attorney Shaw Friedman and his utility law co-counsel, Keith Beall of Carmel, Indiana will be filing an appearance in the case (IURC Cause No. 45377) by the end of the week.

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